

Frank Chyle, Jr. House
Main Street
Protivin
Howard County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-163

HABS
IOWA,
45-PROV,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS
IOWA
45-PROV,
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FRANK CHYLE, Jr. HOUSE

HABS No. IA-163

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: East side of the North end of Main Street, next to the former Bohemian Savings Bank (now Decorah State Bank, Protivin Branch). No street address, Protivin, Iowa 52163
(or)

Lot 60, Subdivision of $W\frac{1}{2}$ of $W\frac{1}{2}$ of $SE\frac{1}{4}$, Section 13, Township 97, Range 11 West of the 5th P.M., Howard County, Iowa.

Date of Construction: 1892 (modified in 1948)

Present Owner: Mrs. Olga Chyle Jung
1730 Corning
Waterloo, Iowa 50701

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Chyle House is significant because of its association with Frank Chyle, Jr., who founded Protivin in 1878.

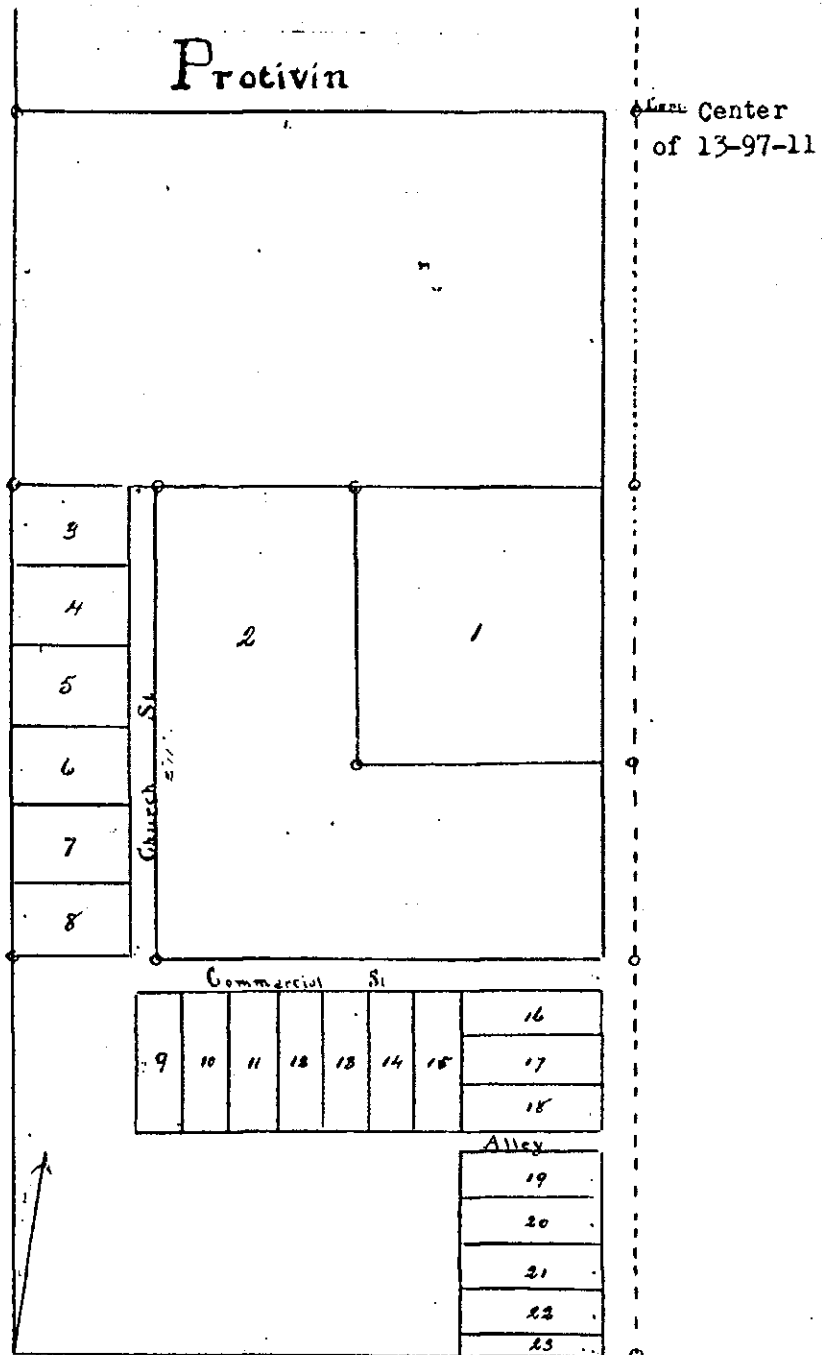
Historian: David C. Anderson
March, 1988

II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

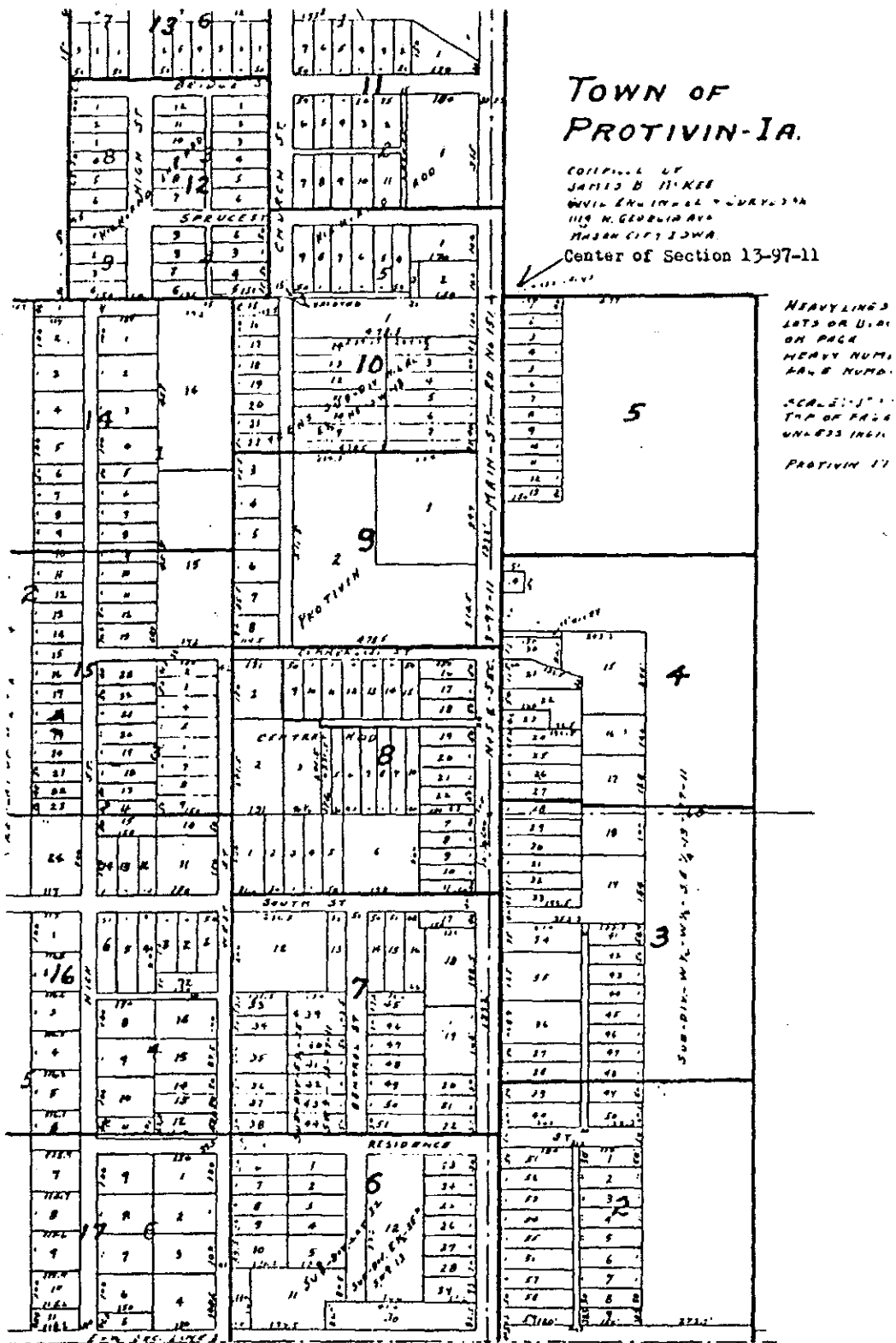
Frank Chyle, Jr. built this house in 1892, according to records in the Howard County Assessor's Office. There is no information about either the designer or the builder. The house was modified slightly in the rear (East side) by enclosing the porch and adding a bathroom in 1948. Other buildings on the site were added subsequently as follows: Summer kitchen 1915, barn 1914, milkhouse 1930, and granary in 1915. The house has been in the Chyle family since its construction. After Frank Chyle Jr.'s death in 1909, his wife Maria and one or more of their children lived on in the house until 1980 when Frank Chyle, Jr.'s daughter Beatrice moved to a rest home nearby. The property has been vacant since then.

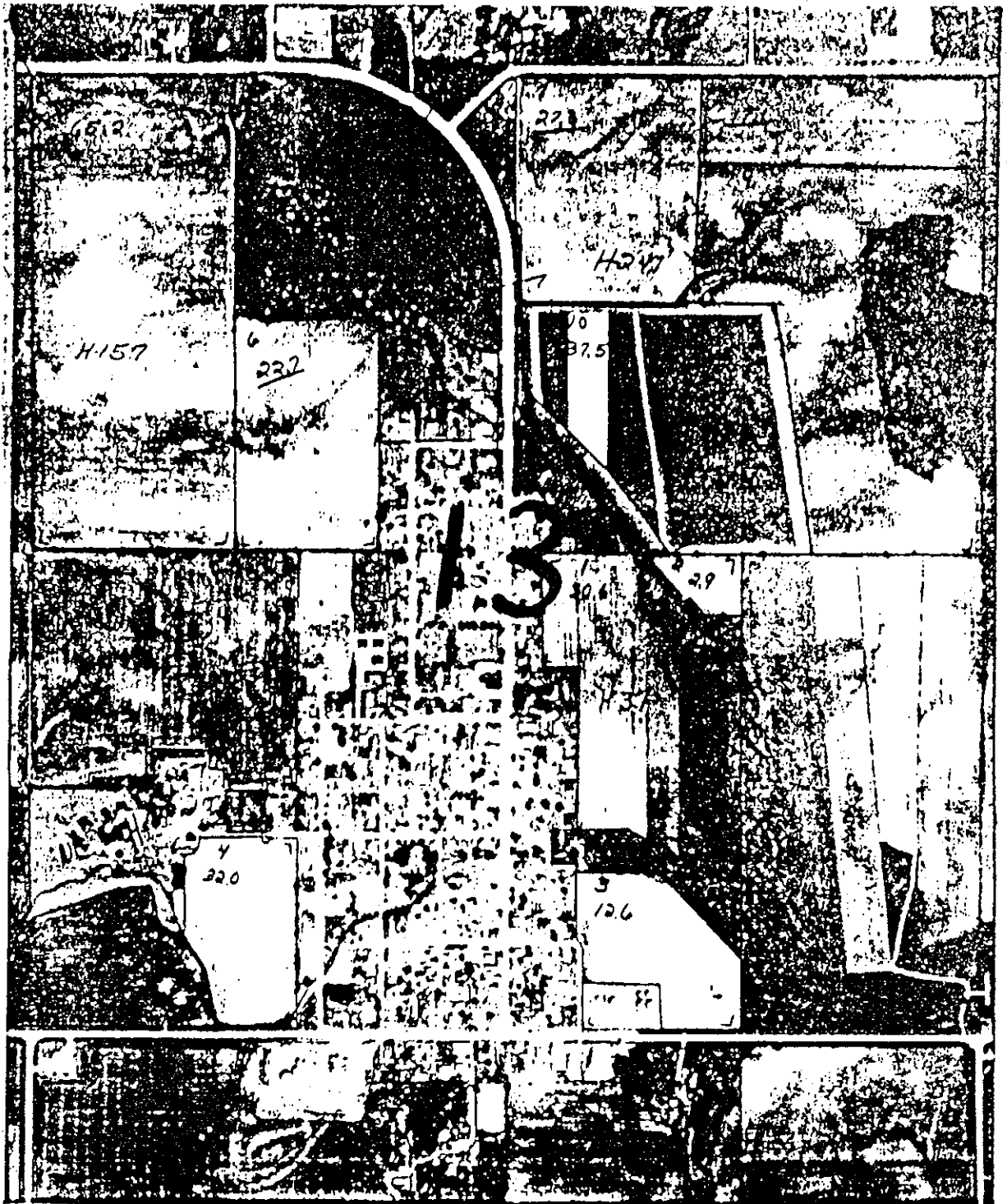
While the Chyle house has no particular architectural significance, it is important historically because of its association with Frank Chyle, Jr., who can be called the founder of Protivin, Iowa, a community of largely Bohemian (Czech) ethnic background with a population today of around 350.

Frank Chyle, Jr. was born on December 1, 1847 in Podcepic, Bohemia and came to Howard County, Iowa in 1858 via Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and Dubuque, Iowa.(1) In the years 1872 and 1876 he purchased the land upon which most of Protivin stands to this day.(2) He filed the first plat of the town in 1878.(3)(See p. 2a) The 1878 plat includes only part of the present day Main Street, and it was on the East side of Main Street that Frank Chyle, Jr. was to erect his house in 1892, opposite Lot 2. Protivin was re-platted in 1914 and p. 2b shows the current plat on file in the Office of Howard County Auditor. Page 2c is an aerial view of Section 13, showing Protivin and the surrounding farm fields.



Photocopy of 1878 Plat, reduced
PLAT, dated June 3, 1878
Town Lot Record "C", p. 595,
Howard County Recorder's Office





NOT TO SCALE

CROP YEAR 1978

Howard

L-11

18

Aerial Map of Section 13-97-11 (reduced photocopy)

USDA -Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Office
Cresco, Iowa

Frank Chyle, Jr. also gave this town its name. It is based on Protivin, Bohemia, the birthplace of his wife, Maria.

Among the highest priorities of the early Czech settlers in this area was to build a parish church. In fact, Frank Chyle, Jr. and his wife had already deeded Lots 1 and 2 to the Holy Trinity Parish when he filed his Plat in 1878.(4) This remains church property, containing the 1907 Holy Trinity church and other buildings. Until his death in 1909, Frank Chyle, Jr. served the town in many ways, including as Postmaster, Township Assessor, Town Marshal, and Mayor. He also was an attorney and operated an insurance business.(5)

Protivin was incorporated in 1894 and has grown slowly but steadily to its current population of about 350. It remains solidly Czechoslovakian in ethnic background.

III. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

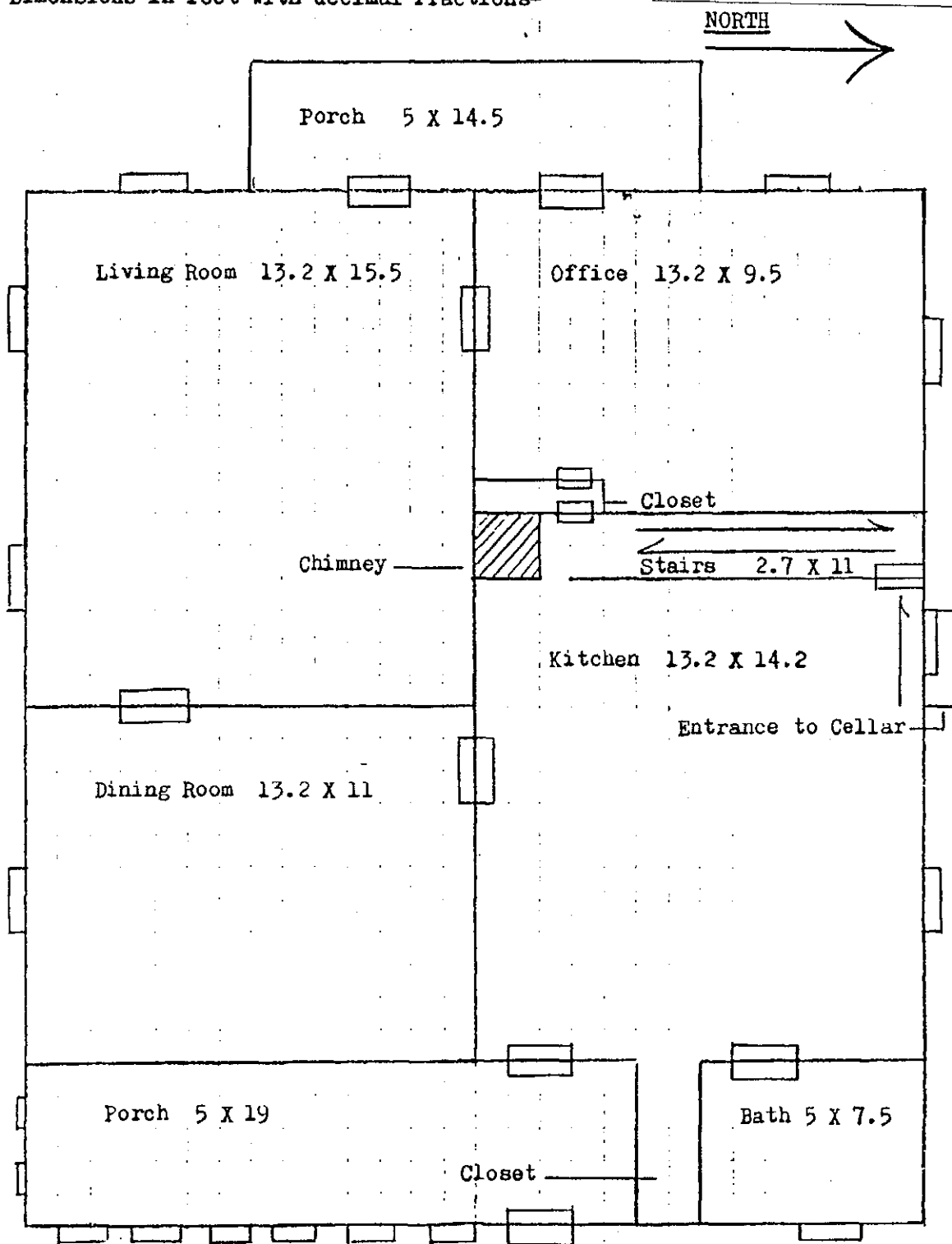
As stated above, the Chyle House is of no particular architectural significance. It can be described as a typical American "four-square", of which many examples can be found in the Midwest after about 1890.(6) There is no evidence here of specifically Czechoslovakian building tradition. The one unusual feature of the building, the twin front doors, is explained by the fact that Frank Chyle, Jr. operated his legal and insurance business from his home. The door on the left leads to what was his office. (see page 3a)

In addition to the information contained in the floor plan (see pages 3a and 3b) and photographs, I would add the following: The house is in good general condition. Of wood frame construction with a poured concrete wall foundation, there is a basement area roughly corresponding to the kitchen in layout. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles, mineral surface shingles.

Chyle House
First Floor
-Not to Scale-

-Dimensions in feet with decimal fractions-

Frank Chyle, Jr. House
HABS No. IA-163
(page 7)



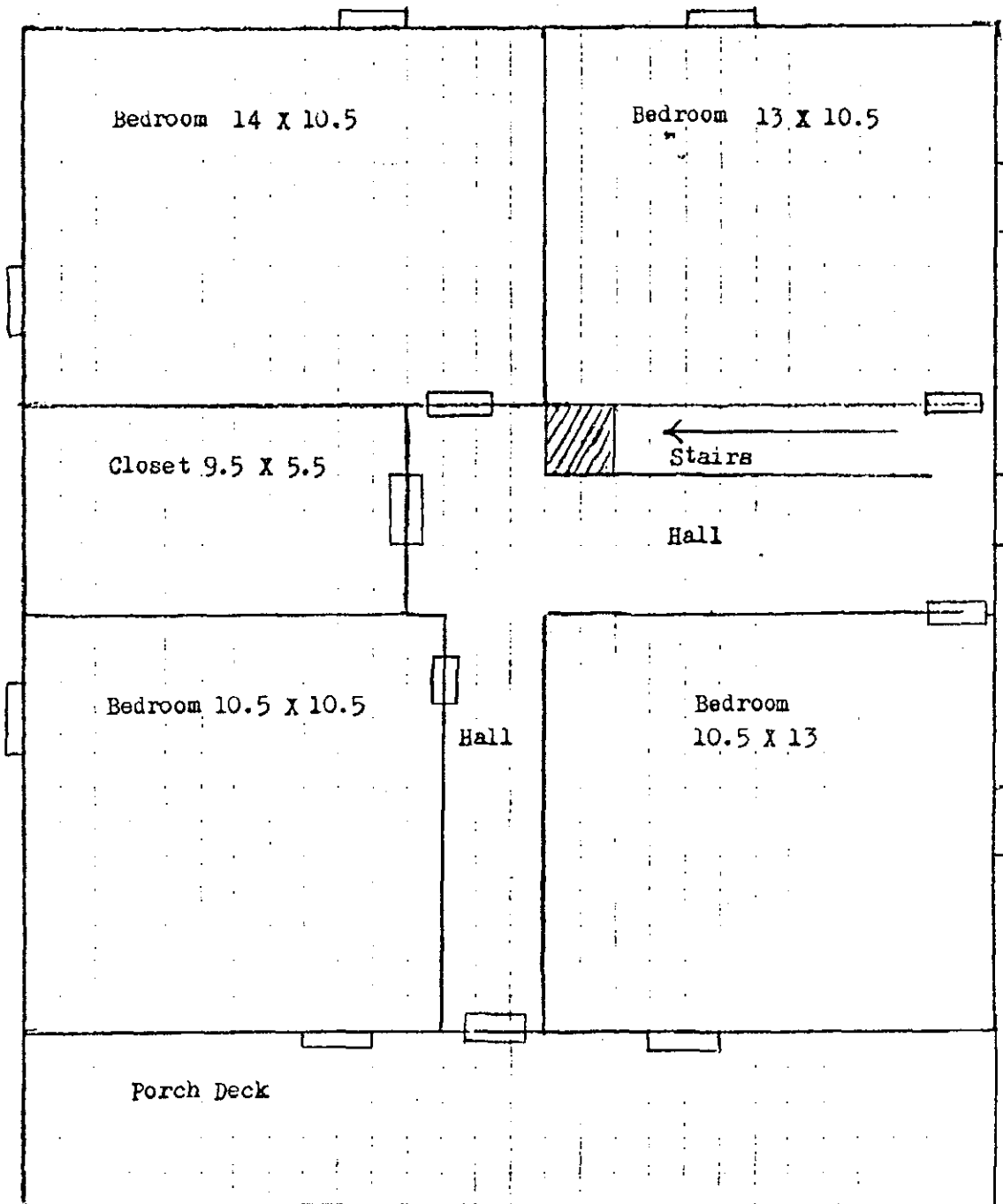
Sketch Plan by D.C. Anderson
March, 1988

Frank Chyle, Jr. House
Second Floor

Frank Chyle, Jr. House
HABS No. IA-163
(page 8)

-Not to Scale-

NORTH



Sketch Plan by D.C. Anderson
March, 1988

On the interior, the walls and ceilings are covered with a fabric made of lath sandwiched between heavy paper applied horizontally and papered over. This was used instead of the conventional lath and plaster walls usually found in houses of this vintage. This material is in poor condition, bowing outward in many places creating an uneven surface. The floors are of tongue and groove pine covered with linoleum. The windows and trim are of wood, lacking embellishment both inside and out. The general character of the interior can be described as plain and simple.

Heating was by individual stoves in each room with their flues connected to a central chimney. There is running water only in the bath area, added in 1948. The house is wired for electricity, and to all appearances this was done at the time of construction or shortly thereafter.

The house is set about 100 feet back from Main Street, with about 40 feet of yard on either side. Trees were planted which until recently served to almost totally obscure the building from Main Street. To the rear (East side) a Summer kitchen was erected in 1915. This and the other outbuildings indicate that the Chyle property was in fact a farm, with its fields lying to the East of the homesite and Protivin Subdivisions. (see p.2c) According to Olga Chyle Jung, Granddaughter of Frank Chyle, Jr., the farm was operated until 1966 by Vaclav Chyle, a son of Frank Chyle, Jr.

IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Footnotes

1. Fairbairn, Robert Herd, History of Chickasaw and Howard Counties, Volume II, p. 247.

A. Footnotes (continued)

2. DEED, September 23, 1872, recorded November 11, 1872 in Book "O" of Deeds, p. 362. Howard County Recorder, Cresco, Iowa. Conveys $W\frac{1}{2}$ of $SE\frac{1}{4}$, 13-97-11. John S. Mikesh to Frank Chyle, Jr.

DEED, January 24, 1876, recorded March 3, 1876 in Book "S" of Deeds, p. 121. Howard County Recorder. Conveys $E\frac{1}{2}$ of $E\frac{1}{2}$ of $SW\frac{1}{4}$, 13-97-11. Frank Bouska to Frank Chyle, Jr.
3. PLAT, June 3, 1878, filed August 31, 1886. Town Lot Record "C", pp. 594-595. Howard County Recorder.
4. The Deed conveying Lots 1 and 2, dated May 15, 1878 is reproduced in Pecinovsky, Gerald G., Protivin, A Czech Settlement, p.6.
5. Fairbairn, *ibid.*, Pecinoveky, p.2.
6. Gowans, Alan, The Comfortable House, p. 87.

B. Bibliography

- Capek, Thomas, The Czechs in America. Boston & New York: 1920.
- Fairbairn, Robert Herd, History of Chickasaw and Howard Counties, Iowa. Volume II. Chicago: 1919.
- Gowans, Alan, The Comfortable House, Cambridge, Mass.: 1986.
- Klimesh, Cyril M., They Came to This Place. A History of Spillville, Iowa and Its Czech Settlers. Sebastopol, CA: 1983. Spillville lies ca. 8 miles East of Protivin in Winneshiek County.
- Pecinovsky, Gerald G., Protivin, A Czech Settlement. 1978.
There is no other bibliographical material available for this pamphlet, published to coincide with Protivin's Centennial celebration. An excellent source of both photographs and information.

C. Other Information

All dates concerning plats, titles, and building construction are available in the Offices of Recorder, Auditor, and Assessor at the Howard County Courthouse in Cresco, Iowa.

The recollections of Charles Shores, lifetime resident of Protivin, and Mrs. Olga Chyle Jung, a Granddaughter of Frank Chyle, Jr. were of great value in preparing this document and are incorporated into the text.

This document was prepared for the Decorah State Bank, Decorah, Iowa in connection with its branch relocation project in Protivin, Iowa

by:

David C. Anderson, Ph.-D.
Architectural Historian
March, 1988